

prayer & fasting

Go Nuclear!!!!!!

Luke 4:1-13

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Objective Sentence and Aim: Everyone should fast because of the challenges we face daily in our spiritual lives.

Introduction: William Blake: Great things happen when men and mountains meet (bridges, dams, tunnels, canals, airplanes, medicine, etc.) What do the mountains you encounter, those things standing in the way of God's best for your life, look like? And remember if you are going to conquer a mountain than you will need climbing, digging, and hiking equipment to get you over, around or through it.

There are strongholds (mountains) that will empower you for greatness if you will humble yourself before God and allow Him to help you conquer them. Ephesians 3:20 says, "Now unto Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above you can ask or think, according to the power that works in you. There is greatness in everyone who has the Spirit of God abiding in them.

Here are some mountains that men and women meet that will create opportunities for great things to happen through your faith in Christ. Number One: **Blessing**—Jesus was baptized by John and the heavens were opened to Him but immediately after that experience He went into the wilderness to be tempted by the enemy. **Blessing often becomes a mountain.** Some others are anger, unforgiveness, gossip and social media addiction, negativity, bad attitude, apathy, sexual vices, drug dependency (prescription and recreational), unwholesome relationships, tobacco use, cussing, drinking, prayerlessness, lack of commitment, pride, jealousy, laziness, instability, marital problems, fear, selfishness, discouragement, guilt, etc. If you are wrestling with any one of these things or something else I failed to list then I have good news for you. **Weakness is your greatest blessing and blessing is your greatest weakness.** But the only blessing there is in weakness is when it is transformed into miracles through the power of God. Victory and greatness come only when you one conquer mountains.

Now let's talk about climbing equipment: the Word God, prayer and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit are necessary. But what do you do when these basic tools are not enough. Go nuclear!!!!!! Jesus' disciples asked him (**Matt. 9:28-29**) , "Why couldn't we cast out that evil spirit. Jesus replied, "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting. **Matt. 9:14-15**

** *Strongs O.T. (6684, 6685 tsoom):* to cover over the mouth

** *Strongs N.T. ((3522. 3523 nace-tyoo' o)* Abstinence from food; to abstain from food; not eating. **Lu. 4:2** Jesus ate nothing at all.

- #1. Temptation** (Lk. 4:1-2 Then Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan River. He was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where He was tempted by the devil for forty days. **Jesus ate nothing** all that time and became very hungry)
- A. Andrew Murray:** *Fasting is an announcement the soul makes that the body will not rule over it, and it declares there will be no relief until the issues set before God are resolved in spirit. Fasting does not signal sincerity but rather humbles the soul with dependence upon God.*
- 1. Power** (Lk. 4:2 tempted by the devil for forty days. Jesus ate nothing all that time and became very hungry.)
 - a. Lk. 4:3 if you are the Son of God, tell this to become a loaf of bread.
 - b. **Pastor Dan:** Jesus never used His power for His own personal benefit. Satan tempted Christ to misuse His power.
 - c. **Matthew Henry:** Fasting secures God’s power to assist us, it sharpens prayer, it demonstrates humility before God, it controls the body.
 - d. Ps. 39:13 I humbled myself with fasting
 - e. Ps. 69:10 When I weep and fast, they scoff at me
 - 2. Priority** (Lk. 4:8 the devil took him up and revealed to him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. ⁶ “I will give you the glory of these kingdoms and authority over them,” the devil said, “because they are mine to give to anyone I please. ⁷ I will give it all to you if you will worship me.)
 - a. **Pastor Dan:** Satan attempted to convince Christ that He could get all that He wanted by following Him. *Christ rebuked the enemy and continued to do as He had always done—made God His first priority.*
 - b. **Matt. 6:33** *Seek first the Kingdom of God*
 - c. **Exodus 20:3** *You must not have any other god but me.*
 - 3. Privilege** (Lu. 4:9-11 The devil took him to Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, and said, “If you are the Son of God, jump off! For the Scriptures say, He will order his angels to protect and guard you)
 - a. **Pastor Dan:** One cannot afford to take God for granted and become reckless and careless in their walk with God. Instead we must be cautious and careful in walking with the Lord.
 - b. **Jer. 17:9** The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?
 - c. **Pastor Dan:** Some say when they are doing wrong, “God knows my heart.” But let us remember that our works reveal the true condition of our hearts.
- #2. Intervention** (Mk. 1:12 Jesus was out among the wild animals, and angels took care of Him. **Matt. 4:11** Then the devil went away, and angels came and took care of Jesus. **Lu. 4:13** when the devil finished tempting Jesus, he left him until the next opportunity came.) *Note: The angels took care of Jesus because He was being led by the Holy Spirit, seeking the Lord with His whole heart and fasting.*
- A. Franklin Hall:** *Christians with everyday cares of business, job and home are usually so out of tune with the spiritual realm, that it seems practically impossible to get into*

communion with God. Therefore they are not in a position to contact God about the major problems of their lives, without fasting and prayer.

1. **Dependence** (2 Chron. 20:1-3 *the armies of the Moabites, Ammonites, and some of the Meunites declared war on Jehoshaphat.* ² *Messengers came and told Jehoshaphat, "A vast army from Edom is marching against you from beyond the Dead Sea. They are already at Hazazon-tamar."* (This was another name for En-gedi. Jehoshaphat was terrified by this news and begged the LORD for guidance. He also ordered everyone in Judah to begin fasting. So people from all the towns of Judah came to Jerusalem to seek the LORD's help).
 - a. **Pastor Dan:** You gain faith through fasting that will help you overcome your fear and cause you to receive God supernatural intervention in your life.
 - b. **Phil. 4:6** Don't worry about anything but in everything by prayer and supplication. . . . There are times in your life when prayer alone is not enough (Hannah) (Disciples **Mark 9:18**) I asked your disciples to cast out the spirit and they could not.
 - c. **Pastor Dan:** When we do our part in resisting the enemy the Lord will do His part and intervene into our adversity.
 - d. **Sermon Illustrations:** In Scripture we see several purposes for fasting. It's part of the discipline of self-control; it's a way of sharing that we depend on God alone and draw all our strength and resources from Him; it's a way of focusing totally on him when seeking his guidance and help, and of showing that you really are in earnest in your quest; it's also, at times, an expression of sorrow and deep repentance, something that a person or community will do in order to acknowledge failure before God and seek his mercy.
 - e. **Mahatma Gandhi:** My religion teaches me that whenever there is a distress, which one cannot remove, one must fast and pray.

Closing and final invitation: In 1980 soon after I had gone home after my second separation from Nancy; Pastor Wayne Friedt showed up at the Lakeland Yacht Club and talked to me two hours about my spiritual life. I had gotten out of church and was struggling: things were not well at home and I was hanging on to my faith in God by a thread. That night I decided to fast and seek the Lord until He moved in my life. I ran across a book written by Franklin Hall entitled, *Atomic Power with God through Fasting.* I read it and decided to fast for forty days like Jesus. So for ten days, while working as a server at the Yacht Club I fasted, drinking only water. It was hard but it paid off. I grew ten years spiritually in ten days and some deep-seated emotional healing took place through that fasting experience. I had gained more self-control and didn't pitch fits or fly off the handle like before. It was soon after that the Lord gave me a special revelation letting me know with certainty that He had called me into ministry. This divine appointment (defining moment) gave me the courage to say yes to the Lord and pursue ministry.